



ABHIMANYU SAMANTA SIMHARA

The sculpture reproduced on the end paper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A. D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi

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ABHIMANYU SAMANTA SIMHARA

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## Life

### Introduction

The poet Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara is one of the few finest creative writers whose works have survived the all-pervading time-machine through the vicissitudes in the great span of Oriya literature. Abhimanyu has not produced heaps of literary works comparable to the pioneer Oriya poets like Sarala Das, Balaram Das, Jagannatha Das and Upendra Bhanja. But, whatever poetic contribution he has made to the domain of Oriya literature stands in golden colours till date through the trials and tribulations of time. Particularly, his lyrical *kavya Bidagdha Chintamani* has brought for him such success and fame which his contemporaries failed to achieve. In fact, *Bidagdha Chintamani* remains the gem of cultivated thoughts being nurtured by all the poetic nobility of Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara. *Bidagdha Chintamani* is really an outstanding creation of Abhimanyu's poetic merit. In the subsequent pages of this monograph we will analyse the life-history, literature and artistic beauty of this outstanding poet.

### Life Sketch

It is really a challenge to the researchers to prepare the life-history of the poets belonging to the early and middle periods of Orissan literature. Orissa being the land of Lord Jagannatha, the deity embodying the assimilation of all religions, large-heartedness and tolerance were the chief aspects of its national character. At no time self-propagation and crave for glory were the ambitions of the Oriya people. Only for this reason the holy land of Utkal has kept many a pieces of literature, art and sculpture anonymous. So it is no wonder that in

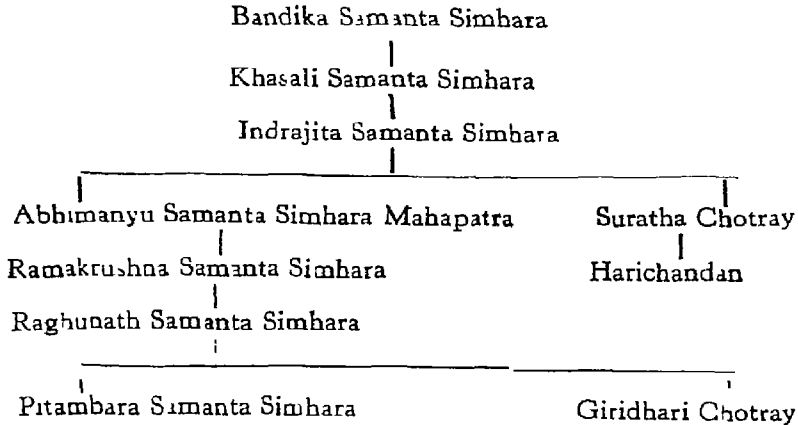


the later stages the scholars sweated to bring to light the authors of these rich creations.

Moreover, sheer poetic impulsion as against advertisement for self-establishment and fame was the spirit guiding the ancient and medieval poets. As such the authors of literary history or the critics had to face enough of trouble in the later periods. However, they have found scope to incorporate exaggeration and supernatural elements in sketching the lives. In the mid-heaven of truth and imagination the real life of many poets has remained unexposed to light. A tale like this has also engulfed the life-history of Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara. By indulging in a simple jest the poet lost his wife for ever. This unfortunate accident reduced his life into an ash-bin of the dried spring. The Kavya, *Bidagha Chintamai*, is the shimmering gold in that ash heap.

#### Family Heredity of Abhimanyu

Of the few biographies surviving so far, one written by Pandit Mrutyunjaya Ratha in the pages of *Utkal Sahitya* is recognised as the most authentic. The subsequent biographers are greatly indebted to him. The genealogy of Abhimanyu as provided by Mrutyunjaya Ratha is as follows :



Abhimanyu has mentioned 'Balía' ( on two occasions ) as the place of his birth in *Baghagita* and *Premakala*. While Mrutyunjaya Ratha mentioned the birth place of Abhimanyu as Balía in the Jajpur sub-division of Cuttack district following *Baghagita* ( Verse of the Tiger ), Jagabandhu Singh, the famous author of *Prachina Utkala*, has suggested Golakunda village, following the book *Premakala*. The renowned historian Manmohana Chakrabarti discussed the birth place of the poet in the Asiatic Society Journal and supported the views advanced by Jagabandhu Singh. He wrote, "...Of his father and Zamin-dary, Abhimanyu has given a short description in his *Premakala*. They lived at Golakunda which is now situated on the left bank of the Brahmani river, 20°.42' lat. and 86°.18' long. The Jaj-nagara referred to was the old name of modern Jajpur. The family quarters have now been removed to Balía, a few miles east". Professor Bijaya Chandra Majumdar in the preface of his book *Introduction to the Study of Oriya Literature* has written that the poet was born in the Fuslee year 1164, corresponding to 1756 A. D., at Balía in the Jajpur sub-division of the district of Cuttack.

Indrajita Samanta Simhara, the father of Abhimanyu, had many wives. In those days kings and the nobles used to lead a polygamous life. The regal pleasure to enjoy every bit of life amidst wealth and affluence irresistibly induced the kings and emperors to lead a polygamous life. But Indrajita accepted more than one wife not only for his enjoyment but also for a child. Even after marrying seven women his hopes did not materialise, and so he accepted Tulasi Devi, the daughter of the famous Patnaik family of the Udayapur village, for the eighth time. Tulasi Devi was a pious lady. After many fasts and austerities by the lady, Abhimanyu was born to her as a boon. So the influence of his mother on the life of Abhimanyu was very great. Though living in affluence, his mind was being shaped by the pious nature of his mother.

### The Time of Abhimanyu

It is difficult to arrive at any consensus regarding the date of birth of Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara. In this regard the opinions of Manmohana Chakrabarti, Bijaya Chandra Majumdar, Pandit Mrutyunjaya Ratha, Jagabandhu Singh, Dr Artaballav Mohanty, Dr Harekrushna Mahatab, Pandit Surya Narayan Das etc. should be considered. They all have expressed similar views regarding the date of Abhimanyu, whereas Dr Asutosh Patnaik, basing his research on Abhimanyu's *Premakala*, has suggested a different date. Considering majority opinion in the matter, the date of Abhimanyu's birth can be fixed between 1737-38 A. D.

### His Early Education

Abhimanyu was the loving child of a zamindar family. Being the only male child in his family all attention was given to him by his parents.

The kings and the zamindars were the patrons of music, literature and dance during the medieval period in India. According to the traditions of the period, the scholars and artists excelling in various fields were invited from other lands to exhibit their erudition. In those days Sanskrit language was recognised as the language of the gods which is why the importance of Sanskrit was admitted by the kings and the emperors. Abhimanyu was brought up amidst this tradition and this earned him mastery over Sanskrit literature and access to the six systems of philosophy, rhetoric, grammar, lexicon, astrology and mathematics. Besides the Sanskrit poetics and books on rhetoric, the finest lyrics in the Oriya language, epics, Vaishnavite literature relating to religion, *Tapini* and devotional works were also meticulously read by him. These had left tremendous influence on the creative style of Abhimanyu. Moreover, he had the opportunity to read diligently the *Gita-govinda* of Jayadeva, the fine and melodious poems of Chandidasa

and Vidyapati and other Vaishnava literatures of Pancha Goswamis. In this favourable surroundings and literary atmosphere Abhimanyu grew up. Besides all these, he had the unique privilege of coming under the influence of his teacher Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma. In later years the poetic genius of Abhimanyu dazzled in Oriya literature. In *Prema Torangini* of Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma, traditional teacher disciple relationship ( Guruparampara ) of Abhimanyu is shown as follows :

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu  
|  
Sri Gadadhara Pandita Goswami  
|  
Sri Ananta Acharya Goswami  
|  
Sri Raghubopala Goswami  
|  
Laxmipriya Thakurani  
|  
Ranganamata Thakurani  
|  
Sri Banamali Das  
|  
Sri Kishore Das  
|  
Sri Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma  
|  
Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara.

The teachership of Sadananda immensely contributed to the scholarship of Abhimanyu.

Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma was not only a scholar or poet but a devout worshipper of Radha and Krishna as well. Adopting the enactment of Radha Krishna theme he composed *Jugala Rasamruta Lahari*, *Jugala Rasamruta Chauhari*, *Chaura-Chintamani* and *Nistha-Nilamani* which earned for him name and fame among the erudite scholars of the then society. During the childhood days of Abhimanyu the influence of Sadananda, the poet and devotee, was no less. He initiated many men and women in Vaishnavism which brought him importance and fame as a successful religious preacher. Sadananda

was consciously keeping an eye on Abhimanyu to make him learn and delve into the eternal love of Radha and Krishna. He gave Abhimanyu whatever insight he acquired in Vaishnavism, the philosophy that influenced him, and the ideals and literary works that guided him for his success in life. Abhimanyu assimilated and brought to efflorescence the ideals of his guru for a fruitful and spiritual living. The auspicious presence of Sadananda processed that philosophy in his thoughts, made him search the same essence he cherished, taught him that literature he was following and made him intent and meditative to hear the flute of spiritualism. Abhimanyu, the baptised, the awakened, the scholar, the seeker of truth heard that distant flute till he breathed his last.

This ideal in life of Sadananda transformed Abhimanyu into a devoted poet. Abhimanyu followed Sadananda on the way of life as the shade follows the shape. This devoted poet of Vaishnava philosophy and thought, though locked in family life, was never engulfed in it. Like a drop of water standing on the lotus leaf, the life of Abhimanyu remained unaffected even being immersed in it. So, remaining in his limited environment he could search for the unlimited.

Abhimanyu developed a flair not only for Sanskrit and Oriya but for Bengali and Maharashtrian language as well. Further, he was quite proficient in reading and interpreting logic, literature, Veda, Agama and Kavya. In addition to this scholarship and exalted intellectual power Abhimanyu had an emotional and poetic mind filled with compassion and tolerance. For this it is said that the works of Abhimanyu blend the three qualities of intellect, scholarship and emotion.

### **Influence of Friendship on the Life of Abhimanyu**

The influence of friendship on the life of a person is always deep. The absence of befitting companionship in the case of

a man makes his life grey but the help of a true friend buds and blossoms the garden of his life. Considering from this angle the influence of friendship on the life of Abhimanyu cannot be underestimated.

The intimate friend whose selfless inducement lay behind Abhimanyu's poetic life was Tankadhara Nayak. In this connection Pandit Mrutyunjaya Ratha had written that during his stay at his maternal uncle's residence he was acquainted with Tankadhara Nayak. From that date Tankadhara remained one of his intimate friends till his death. Later Indrajita Samanta Simhara entrusted the education of his loving child in his hands. Tankadhara was an erudite scholar in many subjects besides being a Sanskrit pundit for which he was liked by Abhimanyu. Remaining in the company of an erudite friend like Tankadhara, it became easy on the part of Abhimanyu to dwell on various aspects of life and literature.

### **Marriage and Conjugal Life**

The time of Abhimanyu was a crucial period in the history of Orissa. So the preservation of the traditional ways of life became essential in the society. Child-marriage was the order of the day. What lay behind this social sanction of child-marriage remains a matter of investigation. It cannot be denied that it was meant to preserve the sanctity and stability of the society. Thus the poet Abhimanyu married Vimala Devi, the daughter of the zamindar of Kendrapada, at the early age of fourteen. Vimala Devi was not only an ideal housewife but also a pious lady. Vimala Devi made Abhimanyu's life conjugally and spiritually exhilarating.

Vimala Devi also freed Abhimanyu from the material tribulations and smoothed and widened the path of his literary activities. It was not an easy affair to maintain the estate which Abhimanyu inherited. Vimala Devi, being the daughter of a landlord, had to a certain extent the experience and

capability of maintaining the estate. She kept a careful eye on the material side and set her self-indulging husband free from it to roam like a bird. Thus the long-awaited chance to enter the poetic garden materialised. Pandit Mrutyunjaya Ratha has aptly written in his essay *Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara* that his wife Vimala Devi was a lady of quality and education and she was greatly devoted to Lord Krishna. Having her as his wife the religious life of Abhimanyu became complete and bright. In the later years the flowering of the poetical genius in Abhimanyu was the result of indirect inducement from Vimala Devi.

There is a legend relating to the death of his wife like this : As a devoted wife, Vimala Devi would never take any thing, even water, till her husband dined. Once Abhimanyu asked her in jest, "Since you are not able to remain a moment without me, what can you do if I die?" Vimala Devi replied, "Why should I live without you, I will also follow you." It is said that to test the truth of her words Abhimanyu once made a jest. He started to acquaint himself with the affairs of his estate. A barber was following him. From the way he sent the barber back telling him, "Go and tell your landlady that the lord has been carried away by a tiger." When the barber related this to Vimala Devi she fell down dead instantly. No doubt the later effect of this sad incident had been heart rending. According to scholars this caused pathetic remorse in Abhimanyu which made him more and more apathetic towards the domestic and social life.

There is no prima facie evidence to believe this event in the life of Abhimanyu. The same story is also found repeated in the life of more than one Oriya poet, especially those poets whose theme in poems has been love and unhappy affections. Frustration in love in personal life is generally alleged to have occurred behind the sublimity of their creation. However, it is quite possible that the death of Vimala Devi had cast wide spread consequences on the life of Abhimanyu. The sad

demise of Vimala Devi brought about a profound aloofness in the life of Abhimanyu and that melancholy state of his mind influenced his poetic creations.

Abhimanyu, with the feelings of a solitary Radha, composed his famous and ever lasting work *Bidagdha Chintamani*.

It can be admitted without doubt that the world-weariness of Abhimanyu became a boon for his incessant singing of Krishna's glory like that of Jayadeva, Vidyapati and Vilvamangala – the greatest of the Indian lyrical poets.

### **The Last Days of Abhimanyu**

*The last days in the life of Abhimanyu were pathetic and thrilling as well. They were spent in endless seclusion. The untimely death of his beloved wife, who was more than his own self, enhanced his indifference and detachment manifold. He was always immersed in the ocean of thought for the love of Radha and Krishna. Abhimanyu, the woe-torn poet, who remained immersed in the love of Radha and Krishna, enjoyed heavenly pleasure in his poetic world. Being aware of his ending of life he decided to breathe his last at Brundaban, the spot where the perennial game of his beloved Lord was enacted. But his hopes remained unfulfilled. Taking leave from his friends, relatives and family members he started for Brundaban. But going only two miles from Balia, his place of residence, he fell ill and faced difficulty in breathing. The family deity of Abhimanyu was brought to the spot where the helpless Abhimanyu lay and there he breathed his last beholding his dear Lord. The life of an outstanding poet thus ended. It is difficult on the part of any ordinary person to achieve what he accomplished in the last phase of his life. Love and devotion provided the inspiration—total and abiding—to his creative endeavour.*

♥



## The Eighteenth Century Orissa : Political

Orissa in the eighteenth century was, in fact, an Orissa of sorrow and suffering. Even the pages of her history are coloured in heinous, barbarous and rude criminal oppressions. The story of cruel brigandage that infested the land is found in the pages of *History of Orissa* by Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab. In his language the Marahatta rule is the synonym of oppression in Orissa. The fear of that rule is still alive in the memory of the Oriya people. In order to collect money rude oppression was carried out by the Marahattas and it is heard from the elderly people of Orissa till today.

Historians have fixed the date of the Marahatta rule in Orissa in between 1751—1803. In the year 1751 the Marahatta rulers brought Orissa under their sway defeating Alibardi Khan, the ruler of Bengal. From that time till the advent of the British power in 1803, Orissa was under the Marahatta rule. But in occupying Orissa the Marahattas failed to establish a strong and stable reign which depends, in fact, on the personality, organising ability and skill of the ruler. But the Marahatta rulers lacked personality. Internal indiscipline weakened the Marahatta central power. Craze for power and selfishness always dismembered the seat of administration. In fact, the condition of the Marahatta rulers ran down to such a state of affairs that they could not establish a strong administration in the country. W. W. Hunter made the following observations about the sorrowful state of Orissa in his *History of Orissa, Vol. II*: "I have most carefully examined the records of this period but I can detect absolutely no trace of anything like a civil administration. The Marahatta cavalry harried the country at stated periods each year and departed with the spoil. The village communes alone stand out above the stormy waste of water and their internal organisation formed the only

sort of civil government during the forty years which preceded our succession in 1803."

The Marahattas after conquering Orissa were facing opposition again and again from the landlords and the generals in charge of the forts. Their central administration was at sixes and sevens for which they were facing this situation more and more. Moreover, there was no co ordination or even good relationship among the feudal lords and the generals in charge of the forts in Orissa. They would often indulge in personal quarrels and bitter enmity among themselves. They preferred to guard their own selfish ends rather than the interests of their country or the nation. So there was no sense of an independent nation nor was there the slightest effort in that direction. As the Oriyas endured the Moghul oppression so also they had to bear the brunt of barbarous oppression of the Burgies ( Marahatta thugs ) without protest. In those days each and every village was ransacked by the Moghuls. The temples and religious shrines fell to the Moghul oppression. New mosques raised their heads on those places instead. As under the Moghul rule the feudal lords and native generals could not raise their voice against the rulers, they remained silent and subdued under the Marahatta rule as well. As a result, Orissa experienced a blood bath by the Marahatta plunderers.

This unbearable political situation that engulfed the villages of the land had shaken the heart of the Oriya nation. When the social life of the nation was in the grip of an uncertainty and fear-psychosis, it could survive from that onslaught only with sustenance it received from its art, literature and culture. "The social organisation of the villages firmly tried to protect the national culture, literature and art in their own spheres. In various corners of the land, the local militia and their leaders did not stay behind to fight back the Marahatta oppression. However, inspite of the political uncertainty and economic strife the kings and the landlords were keenly

interested in patronising art and literature. So amidst these trials and tribulations the traditional literature was found to be flowing continuously in prosperity" (*History of Orissa* by H K Mahatab). The poet Abhimanyu was the successful inheritor of this tradition. Though the Marahattas destroyed the political and economic life of Orissa, they did not interfere in the activities of the religious institutions like the Moghuls. As a result the religious and spiritual life of Orissa remained free from the interference of administration and exploitation. For this reason the creation of spiritual literature in Orissa did not experience the slightest ebb. The very many Puranas and poems that were composed during this period were the result of this religious consciousness and of the spiritual environment.

### **The Background of the Literature in the Riti Age**

To appreciate the literary ideal and poetic consciousness of Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara a knowledge of the traditional stylistic age (Riti) of literature is essential. Because each poet is a product of his age and at times he becomes the creator of another age. Of course Abhimanyu could not be taken as the pioneer of the stylistic age in Oriya literature as it was already created by Upendra Bhanja. The composition of poetry by Abhimanyu reached a stage where he was unequivocally termed as the emperor of music and sentiment, though Upendra remained the emperor among the poets. That is why Upendra was known as "Kabi Samrat" (Emperor of poets) whereas Abhimanyu as "Sangita Samrat" (Emperor of music).

The elementary ideal of the stylistic age was to follow the foot-steps of the Sanskrit literature. In those days the national literature of India was Sanskrit and from that source the regional literatures were collecting materials for their enrichment. So the stylistic literature was not only followed in Orissa but also in other regions of the country. In viewing the traditional Indian literature it is seen that from a long long time this

system was being followed in literary works. Sir Buhler has rightly said in *Indian Inscriptions and Antiquity of Indian Artificial Poetry* : "In the Girnar inscription of Rudramana there was the evidence of the use of figures of speech. During the time of the spread of Jainism there was also evidence of the figures of speech in *Chario Kaha* or the *story of life*. Besides this, the poets like Asvaghosha, the greatest poet Kalidasa, Magha, Basabhatta, Sriharsha, Bhababhuti, Umapatidhara, Muraari, Bharavi etc. have composed poems ornamented with figures of speech. Even in Orissa during the 14th century A.D., at the time of Narasimha Deva 3rd, the book *Ekavali* by Vidyadhara and in the 15th century A.D. the famous work *Sahitya Darpana* on the figures of speech by Viswanatha Kaviraja were composed."

From the dawn of the stylistic age or the age of *alankara* it becomes very clear that instead of the soul emphasis was laid on the body of the verse. A poem is composed of two aspects, such as the form and the content, the body and the soul. At times the poets become absorbed in beautifying the soul of the poem (*Rasa*) and at other occasions they pay more attention to the body of the poem that is figures of speech (*alankara*). As ornaments beautify a woman similarly the figures of speech (*alankara*) beautify the poem. So at the base of the creation of stylistic literature the form of the poem was given more attention. In lieu of the soul, the ornamentation of the body was the primary aim of the poetic endeavour in this age.

In the early days of the Age of Style, the verses and epics (*Mahakavyas*) that attracted our attention were developed mainly out of the characters and stories of supernatural beings. In the pre and proto 'Pancha Sakha' (five associates of Chaitanya) age the characters delineated in the verses were never of the common people, they were far from human beings. The same tradition of characterization was applied to narrate the characters of Radha and Krishna, Rama and Sita, etc. This tradition, so

far followed in the verse, was broken for the first time in the stylistic age and in place of the Puranic or mythical characters common people figured frequently. As a result, along with Radha and Krishna, Rama and Sita, the real characters like Lavanyavati, Kotibrahmandasundari or Prema Sudhanidhi appeared in Oriya literature. In the descriptions of the love episodes between the princes and princesses more of human experiences of love were painted in place of the spiritual love experiences. There was no parallel to the proportional development made in the stylistic literature as embodied in the kavyas like *Kanchanalata* of Sridharadasa, *Lilavati* of Raghunathbarichandra, *Parimala* of Narasimha Sena, *Sarvangasundari* and *Chitrakala* of Loaknatha, *Tripurasundari* and *Anangarekha* of Dhananjaya Bhanja and *Rasika-Haravali*, *Rasalekha*, *Kalavati*, *Trilokyamohini* etc. of Upendra Bhanja.

Vamana, the upholder of the concept of *guna*, has put more emphasis on the word element than on the sense element. These *gunas* are of three kinds—*ojas* (force), *prasada* (clarity) and *madhurya* (lucidity). Bhamaha had struck a beautiful synthesis of these, viz, *alankara*, and *guna* through an excellent simile saying "Whatever be the facial expression of a beautiful lady if she is not ornamented she does not look beautiful". This ornamentation has been treated as the soul of the kavya by the upholders of the figures of speech. The beauty of ornamentation is considered as the main aspect of this type of poetry. In the verses of the stylistic poets these characteristics are clearly present.

In the early stages of the stylistic poetry a sound traditional base for the composition of Sanskrit lyrics was created. Much earlier than the eighteenth century whatever works on the figures of speech, verses and dramas were composed by Udayana, Govardhanacharya, Jayadeva, Bhaskara, Visvanatha Kaviraja and Raya Ramananda had led to the establishment of a base for the creation of ornate poetry in Oriya language. The

indomitable efforts made by the Oriya poets to place Oriya verses on an equal footing with the Sanskrit verses have an historical basis. Particularly the courts of the kings and the *chaupadhis* ( places for the discussion of literary compositions and meetings ) were the centres for the poetic discourses. The Sanskrit scholars present in the courts and *chaupadhis* not only neglected the composition of simple and easy Oriya verses but also ridiculed the efforts in this direction. As such, a subdued attitude was created among the composers of Oriya poetry. To overcome this, the eighteenth century Oriya poetry was made heavily ornamented. Even attempts were made by Oriya poets to come at par with 'Nisadha' in the domain of the figures of speech.

Though Upendra Bhanja was acknowledged as the creator of the stylistic ( Riti ) age, in point of fact, a sweet combination of the style ( *alankara* ) as well as *guna* was found in the verses of Abhimanyu for the first time. There was only one poetic ideal before Upendra Bhanja which was to elevate Oriya poetry to the level of the Sanskrit literature. But to show skill in style, Upendra adopted a rigorous technique which made understanding of the sense difficult. Of course Upendra warned the readers of this difficulty in his poems by saying—

A coconut bears kernel inside  
Monkeys can lick its hide.

But far from monkeys even the general readers fail to break the coconut to enjoy its kernel. There were a few court scholars roaming about before Upendra instead of the countless general Oriya readers. In their view Sanskrit literature was the only noble literature. If words are not made difficult to understand by embellishment, it is not literature worth the name. So choosing difficult words for composing verses was the most welcome style in that age. Upendra Bhanja not only mastered the art followed in the Sanskrit poetics relating to the figures of speech but he used similes, alliterations, intricate gomutrameter, latent and patent riddles for the figures of

speech and styles which enriched the Oriya poetry. He laid stress on words, not senses and sometimes he showed *ramaniyata* (charm) in his poetry through verbal jugglery and *alankaras*. His poetry is full of *gunas* like *ojas* and *prasad* but not *madhurya*. But Abhimanyu, though he accepted Upendra's new technique in his poetry, gave more emphasis on *guna* like *madhurya* in his poetry. In fact, when considered from this angle it can only be admitted that Abhimanyu was more reader-conscious. He understood that all the readers are not of equal calibre. For the same he had resorted to poetic compositions qualities which are easily understood by different classes of readers in the society.

## The Poetic Glory

Sweet fusion of genius and scholarship is said to be poetry. However, the exposition of the poetic merit rests more on instinctive creative capacity than on scholarship. One can be a scholar depending on his own labour. But creativity is a heavenly gift and on the strength of this a man can possess unique power in life.

The poetic life of Abhimanyu was a strange combination of talent and scholarship. Abhimanyu, the blessed child of God, was outstanding by birth. As said before he got an able teacher like Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma and a friend like Tankadhara Nayak, who were the sources of his inspiration and guidance.

Like the fragrance of the first two leaves of the *Tulsi* plant, the poetic genius of Abhimanyu blossomed from his childhood. Mrutyunjaya Ratha has given an account of the acquisition of Abhimanyu's poetic merit in his article *Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara* : "It is told that Abhimanyu worshipped the holy feet of a pious Vaishnavite at the age of nine and wished his blessings. The holy one was pleased with this and advised the boy to worship Krishna. Abhimanyu returned home and taking a vow to worship for seven days sat in meditation. But on the third day he was directed to repeat the incantation a billion times in the Laxmi temple to get his desire fulfilled. Accordingly the poet went to the Jagannath temple and practised austerity in the proper place whereupon a garland fell from the deity. So finding himself able to fulfil his goal he returned home with the blessed garland. It is said that he wore this garland till death. From this time his poetic gift flowered in a unique way." Besides this legend, Pandit Mrutyunjaya Ratha narrated another wonderful story in this connection : "Some other people say that at the age of nine or ten he



was attracted to a Vaishnava with devotion and begged him to part with incantations for the enhancement of knowledge in poetic composition. The Vaishnava denied him the gift telling that it was a difficult path on the part of a child of his age. But Abhimanyu importuned him whereupon he could not hide his feelings and blessed him with the incantation advising that, 'You should practise incantation of *mantras* continuously in a closed room without taking anything for three days and nights. If you survive to the fourth day then you will be successful in your efforts. Let this be known to your family before you enter into this practice of austerity.' Even after hearing the probability of death, Abhimanyu was not afraid to announce his determination. Hearing this unfortunate news everyone in the family became worried anticipating the uncertain future of the beloved child. The boy started penance in a closed room with indomitable courage. Three days and nights passed away. In the early morning of the fourth day, the assembled family members broke open the door when the child failed to open it and found a flickering candle burning feebly and Abhimanyu lying senseless on the ground. Immediately they started wailing and some of them began massaging butter on his body. After some time Abihmanyu came to his senses. He narrated that he was perceiving the dual image of Radha and Krishna. From that day onwards with determination and endurance he was able to delineate the love episode of Radha and Krishna in his immortal work.'

Not only Abhimanyu but other poets of the early and middle ages also have their life narrated with such supernatural stories. Probably the disciples and admirers trying to find out the source of the creative genius in these poets have incorporated these legends in their biographies. The people believed that Siddheswar Parida had become the great poet 'Sarala Das' receiving the blessings of Goddess Sarala and by the power of *Rama-Taraka Mantra*, Upendra Bhanja, the foremost creative poet of the Riti age, found proper expression of his poetry impulse.

From these two stories by Pandit Mrutyunjaya Ratha it becomes apparent that his brilliancy manifested itself from his very childhood. Determined devotion can transform a common man into an outstanding poet. At least this has come true in the life of Abhimanyu. Abhimanyu transformed the ripples in Oriya poetry into high waves. From the short poems of his childhood days it became as clear as crystal that Abhimanyu would be a great poet experiencing many mysteries of life. In the rainbow of that mystery he offered his obeisance in a verse to Krishna, the deity he had been worshipping all the while.

The shade of the *Karmanga* tree, Oh my dear ;  
 The fortunate will get Krishna.  
 The shade of the *Hasigh* tree, Oh my dear ;  
 Wherever Vinodia the flute player moves  
 There a sweet noise is created.

Not only in this solitary poem but in subsequent years the main focus of his poetry had been on Krishna and Radha. The tone is that of amazement at the love of God.

#### *BAGHAGITA* ( Verse of the Tiger )

Written in his boyhood *Baghagita* ( Verse of the Tiger ) and *Chadheigita* ( Verse of the Bird ) give ample testimony of his talent. These two works were published in the year 1931 by the *Swarajya Sahitya Mandira*. It attracted the immediate attention of the scholars. In the preface of this book Ramaprasad Singh has given the following opinion, "Abhimanyu, the author of *Bidagdha Chintamani*, is the great poet Abhimanyu, the emperor of Orissan poetry. It was known from these two small works that he would one day lay the foundation of poetic glory in the world." When the poetic excellence was blossoming in him, the poet wrote these beautiful pieces which sang about the 'hunting of the

tiger', and the 'rearing of the Gobara Chadhei.' As the fragrance and beauty of a blossoming flower is inherent in the bud so also these two small books contain the qualities that would blossom full force in later works. In order to complete the poetic life of Abhimanyu discussions on the *Baghagita* and *Chadheigita* are essential.

Description of hunting in Oriya literature is exiguous and the poem *Baghagita* is a great step in fulfilling that void. The poem expresses both his flare in writing and his personal experience in hunting. Thus the poem stands as a unique combination of creativity and experience. The area around Balia, the birth place of Abhimanyu, was deeply forested. The forest was the source of livelihood for the landless labourers as it remains even today. Living in the vicinity of the jungle is always a risky business. The open nature of the groves, the dense green foliage, the hide and seek game of the wind and the cacophony of diverse voices of the birds were punctuated at times by the howl of the tigers. The Balia forest had its quota of tigers some of which were man-eaters. The responsibility of killing such tigers fell on the kings and the feudal lords who had training and experience in hunting. During the childhood days Abhimanyu used to accompany his father Indrajita in his tiger hunts. The poem *Bagha Sikara* ( Tiger Hunting ) written in the form of ballad is the proper representation of his experiences.

The poem in twenty stanzas has been written in *Ashadha Sukla Vani* ( Ashadha Sukla meter ) in a simple and natural style. Abhimanyu composed this poem at the age of nine. When he was involved in dangerous tiger hunting, there was no scope for idle imagination. So the lyrical ballad takes the reader directly to the subject matter :

City 'Balia' lies younder,  
 Who rules ? Oh ! Samanta Simhara.  
 What cry ? What noise ?  
 It is the roar of the tigress.

Numerous stories relating to the fearful account of the tiger's onslaught in the forest were heard. The visits of the tiger into the villages were known from the people and Abhimanyu has given a natural and lucid account of this in his lyrical ballad *Bagha Sikara* :

Some say, "In the last dark night  
Near the 'Chaura' the tiger sat tight  
After roaming round the settlement  
Leaving big impressed foot imprint  
I and Ye have seen  
Howled deep by the turmeric green."  
Another made it, "About the fall of the day,  
It rushed to the garden where cattle herds lay  
There it snatched a grazing cattle,"  
Said one among them in a rustle,  
"Escaped by the twinkle of an eye  
To the north she fled, the corpse on the back hung by."  
Yet another exclaimed, "The story is like this :  
At noon by the Cadamba tree in peace  
The tiger slept its head hung low on the ground  
In fear we ran around,  
Gokul ran home by my side,  
Trembling in haste as in a ride."

This beautiful description by the tender poet Abhimanyu touches deeply the heart of the readers. The simple depiction, naturalistic presentation and the creation of proper mood take the reader directly to the place of occurrence. The reader hears the howl of the tiger and feels the collective fear of the villagers in that description. This awful situation around the village Balia constitutes the literary background of the poem *Baghagita*.

This fear of the tiger had not only made the villagers restless but Indrajita Samanta Simhara, the ruler of the estate, was also disturbed by this. This was as if an attack of the

tiger on his manliness. He accepted the challenge and immediately moved to hunt the tiger. Abhimanyu accompanied him. Then started the difficult operation of the tiger hunting. When the forces moved in driving away the beasts firing crackers and beating drums under the command of Jugal Gadanayak, Abhimanyu was impressed. This is narrated in his verse like this :

The cry of the people rent the clouds  
 The blood flows in spring purple  
 The spotted deer barks like a frog  
 The bird screams with the wild hog  
 The earth trembles  
 And the smoke shrouds the hill.

The description of the crackers used in this expedition turns quite awful :

The lightning cracker strikes bright  
 Lord Indra throws his arrows right  
 Cracker bursts with the sound of tang  
 The gun fires thunder with a bang.

The simile like "gun fires thunder with a bang," used by the young poet Abhimanyu, exhibits his commendable merit Lightning kills a lot of people in rural Orissa. This sorrowful incident might have happened around Balia and the poet Abhimanyu might have seen that sight and it went into his poetic sensibility. Such similes are Abhimanyu's fine contribution to poetry.

As the hunters attack the tiger, the tiger is also prepared to fight back. Interference in the domain of the tiger can not be tolerated by the beast. The beast prepares with all its ferocity to exhibit its strength.

The great tiger facing an attack  
 Howls in rage for a fight back.

But in the long run all its strength, anger, howl are silenced. A bullet from Vaikuntha's gun kills the beast. The hunter becomes complacent and his companions see the bullet burst open the beast's forehead bringing death to the beast. Thus ends the tiger hunting. The sky of Balia has been cleared of the cloud of fear after the death of the ferocious tiger. Everyone feels relaxed. And the villagers assemble before the goddess in the village and bathe the deity. A piece of silken cloth is presented to the person in command of this expedition. The poem ends with the lines :

Save us, Oh mother 'Jagulai' ! ( a village deity )  
In devotion Samanta Simhara sings it by.

This lyrical ballad is written in an intricate but delightful style. Further, the picture of Orissan village life, superbly presented by the poet, testifies to the creative talent of the teen aged poet Abhimanyu. The role of village goddesses in Orissa is unique. The goddess was believed to have saved the villages from troubles and misfortunes. Particularly when the villages are affected with contagious diseases like cholera, small-pox and measles the innocent village folk finding no facilities for medicine and treatment pray to the goddess to save them from these menaces. Abhimanyu was deeply related to the village life.

The village is the soul of Orissa. So there is nothing unusual to find the glorious reflections of its culture in Oriya poetry. Not only poetry but its literature as a whole was nurtured in its festivals and festivities, religious as well as social. This was amply reflected in the poetic and philosophic sensibility of the poet. Eventually it found its finest expression in his poetry.

**Chadheigita** ( Verse of the Bird )

Like the *Baghagita* the poem *Chadheigita* is another bright

example of the poetic contribution of Abhimanyu's youth. In this poem there is evidence of the poet's direct experiences like the earlier one. Rearing birds was not only a luxury among the kings and zamindars during those days, but was an addiction keenly practised. For the same they trapped various kinds of birds from the forests and tamed them. The corridors of many kings and feudal lords hummed with the typical notes of those birds during morning and evening hours. Being accustomed to these sights it was only natural on the part of young Abhimanyu to be inclined to such pastimes. He derived pleasure not merely in catching birds but also in arranging fights between them. He has even narrated the way in which a bird can win a battle over its fellow opponent.

Do you want games of fighting birds ?  
 Make balls like the seed mustard  
 Sulphur, garlic, ghee the best  
 Opium-nutmeg-sugarcane juice to paste  
 All it needs is baking with care  
 If the bird to hold its strength bare

The poet has also depicted various types of birds and the art of bringing them up as winners :

Long are the legs recalling copper stick  
 Peacock neck rolling-pin of wick  
 Such quality in bird perchance found  
 Sure will it fight rolling on the ground.

The real experiences of poet Abhimanyu with life and occupation of the rural people have found reflection in this poem. To recognise different types of birds, to arrange fights among them, each for the sake of his own birds' victory, in fact, all the different aspects of this sport have found vivid expression in *Chadhei gita*. The poet Abhimanyu has also shown ample proof of his devotion by recollecting the lotus

feet of Radhamohan, the God he worshipped, at the end of this lyric. In this regard, Dr B. C. Acharya has rightly said that "the childhood creation of Abhimanyu was village-oriented, musical, simple and varied. The feeling and sentiment were according to reality and those were the glory of the composition".

The love of humour in Abhimanyu released him from the shackles of family burdens and brought pleasure of a free life to him. He was not an escapist. In his heart he was always hearing the flute of Radhamohan, his ever-worshipped deity. The same thought, the same feeling and the same longing in him immersed and transformed his life into an ideal pilgrimage. In this stage also whatever lyrics he wrote were sweet and fine. These lyrics are the steps to transform Abhimanyu from a simple poet to a devotional one. The devotional poet reached his maturity in *Bidagdha Chintamani*.

The lyrical compositions of Abhimanyu are presented here in a tabular form.

Lyrical verses	Time of composition	Age of the poet
<i>Premachintamani</i>	1788—89 AD	29th Year
<i>Premakala or Rasakala</i>	1789—90 AD	30th Year
<i>Rasavati</i>	1791—92 AD	32nd Year
<i>Sulakshna</i>	1796 AD	36th Year

In these lyrics composed before *Bidagdha Chintamani* there is the stamp of successful creativity and we will have glimpses of their beauty in the subsequent chapters.

### **Premachintamani**

The poem *Premachintamani* is not an original creation of Abhimanyu. Abhimanyu adopted this in the light of *Govinda Leelamruta* by Jadunandana, the Bengali poet. The *Govinda Leelamruta* is also not an original work but the Bengali translation of the Sanskrit work *Govinda Leelamruta* by Krishnadasa



Kaviraja Gosvami. This Sanskrit work influenced the Vaishnava community immensely. It had a limited readership because of its language and the poet Jadunandana removed this hindrance by presenting a Bengali translation of the same. The simplicity of its Bengali rendering could not but influence Abhimanyu. Thus his *Premachintamani* is the successful literary attainment of that influence.

The subject-matter of the lyric *Premachintamani* in 68 cantos is the game of love between Radha and Krishna for eight *praharas* ( 24 hours ). The poet has tried to indicate the subject-matter in the third canto narrating :

Let us tell the story of a day  
It is amorous in all the way  
Routine of the diurnal course  
Pleasant without the least remorse  
From morning till the moon next  
Will recite a piece all the text  
The story of a day thus spake  
Full of feeling it shall make

The theme of the poem *Premachintamani* can be given below in brief.

In the first canto short exposition of the book is given alongwith the narration of Krishna and Radha ; in the second canto are noted the devotees and Lord Chaitanya ; the essence of divine love of Radha is given in the third canto ; in the fourth canto is depicted the game of love between Radha and Krishna ; in the fifth a return journey at the end of the game and the home coming of Radha is depicted ; in the sixth a short description is given of Krishna's waking from sleep with details, his washing of face and brushing of teeth ; in the seventh mention is made of the friends of Krishna and their pranks with him, e. g. pointing out the marks of love left on his person ; in the tenth canto is noted the art of cooking ; in the eleventh is shown Krishna's way of dining ; in the fifteenth canto is given

Krishna's wandering in the forest ; in the seventeenth canto is narrated the reading of a letter by Radha ; in the eighteenth canto is depicted Krishna's eagerness for the tryst ; in the nineteenth canto Vrndavana Dhama is described ; in the twentieth canto the groves in Vrndavana are narrated ; in the twenty-first canto is given the description of Krishna's emotion and his wandering in the forests ; in the twenty-fourth canto is noted soliloquies of Radha independent of her husband ; in the twenty-fifth canto is given the emotional speech of Radha ; in the twenty-seventh canto is noted the letter of Krishna to Radha ; in the thirtieth is mentioned the meaningful equivocations of Krishna in verse ; in the thirty-first canto the pun of the maid in verse is narrated ; in the thirty-second canto jokes are presented and in the thirty-third canto joyous episodes relating to the stealing of the flutes etc. are narrated.

### Rasavati

This is an imaginary lyrical poem of Abhimanyu, who was influenced by the greatest poet Unpendra Bhanja of the *Riti-Yuga*. The theme of the poem *Rasavati* is like this :

The heroine Rasavati was born of the king Kirtivanta and queen Manorama of Angadesh. She was chosen for the prince Sudhakara of Malava country. As per the then traditions the poet has taken resort to the exchange of paintings between the hero and the heroine in order to generate affection between them. Many a prince including Sudhakara attended *Svayambara* (choosing of the royal bridegroom in a selection meeting). Rasavati and Sudhakara were married as per traditions. All the paraphernalia of marriage were narrated on this occasion according to Oriya customs. Minute descriptions of the titbits regarding pre-marital arrangements, wedlock and the preparatory bath before honeymoon lend a touch of warmth and joy to this poem. The narration of the arrangements made for the honeymoon, the humour and jokes uttered by

the maids on their return from the compartment, sensitiveness leading to misunderstanding and the union at the end, have made this poem a lively comedy. The hero and the heroine have not united in marriage after the love episode, on the other hand they were locked in profound love after marriage. The expression of marital love has been shown in silent gestures in the following verse :

*Malati* flower, fresh and white,  
 Wreathed with care in knots tight  
 Pinned the garland fragrant and fair  
 Quick the hero on mistress's hair.  
 Said in emotion, 'I name you flower'  
 Nodded Rasavati with emotion to share  
 Picking *Kuruvaka* flower in turn  
 Wreathed a garland, hero's whisper born,  
 Placed at his feet and told in pleasure  
 'Repeat this my Lord, whenever in leisure'.

At times it becomes necessary to arrange separation between the lover and the beloved in lyrics. Because separation casts a more lasting spell on the reader than the union. For the same Abhimanyu devised the abduction of Sudhakara by Chitrasena and later made him over to Rasavati bringing him on a swan. The plot created by Abhimanyu is both lively and natural at the same time.

Extra-marital love is valued more in the concept of Gaudiya ( Bengali ) Vaishnavism. But Abhimanyu was influenced by the traditional poetic ideal of Orissa which caused to show the excellence of marital love that made the lyric end in comedy. The entire verse has become an embodiment of rare human sensibilities. Moreover, an important part has been played by a swan in this lyric. In Sanskrit literature the tradition is to select a swan or a cloud as messenger as in *Nala Damayanti* and *Meghduta*. The poet Abhimanyu has given due importance to a swan in this verse. In fact the princess has got back her

mental peace after receiving the news of the prince from the swan.

Abhimanyu has not only named this poem *Rasavati* but also declared it in unequivocal terms that this poem is meant for the lovers of lyrics.

The words, the cantos, and the theme  
Tune in concert love sublime  
All poetic rules that the metre could solve  
The beauties of diction in poetic love  
Sung in cantos two and thirty  
Eight hundred followed one and fifty  
Wreathed in this poetic garland  
For the lovers to neck in poetry land

Excellent art of description, picture of unique marital love and sweet happy ending have made the lyric *Rasavati* a wonderful piece of poetry. Abhimanyu composed this verse at the younger age of twenty-four with the skill of a master.

### **Premakala or Rasakala**

As per the traditions of the 'Riti Age' the names of almost all the lyrics were coined after the names of heroines and as such, some scholars have assigned the name *Premakala* to the poem after the name of the heroine in the verse. But scholars like Pandit Mrutyunjaya Rath, Dr Artaballav Mohanty and others have assigned the nomenclature *Rasakala* to this poem. The critic Pyarimohan Bal has opined in clear-cut terms that the name of the poem is *Rasakala* as mentioned in the collected manuscript. For this reason the name of the poem has been retained as *Rasakala* in this treatise. The poet composed it at the age of twenty. He has clarified this in the first canto of the verse *Rasakala* :

I composed it in the twentieth year  
By the grace of scholars sans fear.

The subject-matter of *Rasakala* is as follows :

Sriradha, the daughter of Brushabhanu, thought of testing the depth of Krishna's love towards her. So she created a beautiful dame named Manobhava. She sent her to Krishna. When Krishna was moved by the beauty of Manobhava, Radha considered her as her co-wife and cursed her to be deprived of care and love of her husband in all her future births. But Krishna, when he came to know of it, wished her to be born in the world again in an unprecedented way and to be famous for her deep love. After this Manobhava took her birth as an emblem of beauty in the world and she was known as Premakala. Ultimately she married a beautiful prince and spent her life in great happiness.

As the heroine Banchhavati in the lyrical *kavya* of Upendra Bhanja was born of the wishes of Parvati for which she was called Banchhavati, so also the heroine Manobhava of Abhimanyu was created from the mind and given the name Manobhava. Not only in coining the name but also in devising the theme of *Rasakala* he has followed Upendra Bhanja's *Lavanyavati*. It is believed that the plot of this poem was designed after the reading of the poem *Lavanyavati*. In *Lavanyavati*, Parvati remained alone in Kailasa during the absence of Siva. In order to play dice she created a daughter from her mind, who was later named Banchhavati. In this case Radha and Krishna have taken the place of Siva and Parvati. In lieu of the game of dice Sriradha created Manobhava to test the true love of Krishna. Like Banchhavati, Manobhava is also an outstanding beauty. In *Lavanyavati* Parvati banished Banchhavati for the reason that Siva had fallen in love with her. In *Rasakala* when Krishna was attracted towards Manobhava, she was cursed. Banchhavati was ordained to meet her death when found locked in a man's arm. So also Manobhava was rudely cursed by Radha not to enjoy the love of her husband in any future birth. As Banchhavati could get a beautiful groom in her next birth, so also Manobhava got

a beautiful prince in her next birth by the grace of Krishna. The unfulfilled desire of the soul in this birth accomplishes its wishes in the next by dint of religious forces. This has been depicted by Upendra Bhanja in his *Lavanyavati*. The same theme has found its echo in *Rasakala*.

### Sulakshana

*Sulakshana* is well ornamented. As the entire *Vaidehisa Vilasa* of Upendra Bhanja is composed with the primary alphabet 'Ba' at the beginning of each stanza and *Rasakallola* of Dinakrushna with 'Ka' alphabet, so also *Sulakshana* is composed with 'Sa' alphabet at the beginning of each stanza. There are sixteen cantos in it composed of sixteen stanzas with sixteen different metres.

Poetic sweetness, colourful description, use of suitable and well-knit metaphors and above all the exhibition of rare erudition transformed the poem *Sulakshana* into a masterpiece of literary achievement. The subject-matter of the poem is given below :

*Sulakshana* was the daughter of Duryodhana, the monarch of Hastinapura. She was the embodiment of beauty *par excellence*. As a suitable groom could not be found for this celebrated beauty, the king Duryodhana arranged a meeting of the suitors in a council for the selection of a groom for his daughter. Immediately this news reached Narada, the sage. He proposed Duryodhana to get his daughter married with Samba, son of Srikrishna. But Duryodhana did not like this proposal as his relation with the Yadavas was not congenial. Narada was hurt by the refusal of Duryodhana. However, he went to the lady's apartments of the palace and blessed *Sulakshana* to become the daughter-in-law of Krishna without any trouble. *Sulakshana* had the secret wish to become the daughter-in-law of Krishna. But when her father was dead against it, how could this be achieved? Narada, however, had an intriguing smile at the corner of his lips. He brought Samba

before Sulakshana by his magic powers. They met and were locked in the game of love secretly. When the story of the secret meeting became known in the next morning, Duryodhana was infuriated and ordered the execution of Samba. The Pandavas supported Samba. This news reached Dvaraka in no time. In vehement anger Balarama with his plough charged at Duryodhana, the King of the Kurus, who fell at his feet in fear. In the long run Samba married Sulakshana without any further trouble.

*Sulakshana* is a poem with a happy ending. This lyric is also influenced by *Lavanyavati* of Upendra Bhanja. As the dream ends both *Lavanyavati* and *Sulakshana* wailed almost in the identical language in their abortive attempts to search out their lovers. In *Lavanyavati* it is composed as :

Ere the fall of the night  
 Rose the cunning lady to cast her sight  
 Alas ! where the youth hast gone ?  
 She wails in pain but replies none.  
 Searching on bed, beating on the heart  
 Losing her senses, tearing clothes apart  
 Dropping her hair, groping round the breast  
 Cried she aloud for the youth in behest

In *Sulakshana*, it is rendered as follows :

Sulakshana shrugged in lightning spark  
 Promptly she woke and flashed in dark  
 Beauty that spelled the Gods in heaven  
 Searched but erred, believing mistaken  
 Undoing the hair and folding the bed  
 Sweeping her breasts tear she shed  
 Did this happen or far from truth  
 Will she find where hides the youth ? ( Canto III )

The poet also wrote this in the introductory verses of *Sulakshana* :

*Sulakshana*, a poem, will be composed  
 With sweet figures of speech nicely ornamented  
 All the moods that the dame experiences,  
 Every line in the poem with 'Sa' commences.

Throughout the lyric the poet has repeatedly exhibited his scholarship. In the thirteenth canto he has used the alliteration of the first letters, the end letters, and early second letters, analogue of the ending second letters, the middle letters, without any diphthongs, continuous alliteration, more and more vowels, similes, rhetoric pretexts, opposites, etc., to show his mastery in composition. He has proved in this short verse that like Upendra Bhanja he was also a wizard in using letters. The genius that sparked in *Sulakshana* beamed like the sun in *Bidagdha Chintamani*.

Besides these works, Abhimanyu composed some *chautisas* or verses in thirty-four lines as per the consecutive Oriya alphabet beginning from 'Ka' to 'Ksha'. In those days lyrics like *chaupadi* ( a poem in four stanzas ), *chautisa* and *koili* ( poem to the cuckoo ), etc., were frequently practised by the creative poets. All the successful poets of each age have enriched the Oriya literature by composing such lyrics. The *chautisas* composed by Abhimanyu are yet to see the light of the day, though his *Bhajana Chautisa* ( Chautisa of Sermons ) and *Kokila Chautisa* ( Chautisa of the Cuckoo ), etc., are outstanding among them. In these *chautisas* the religious concepts and devotional thoughts of the poet were well expressed.

In fact these poems were prelude to *Bidagdha Chintamani*, the best of his creations. Beginning from the *Baghagita* and *Chadheigita* the poetic genius of Abhimanyu found its most mature expression in *Bidagdha Chintamani*.



## Bidagdha Chintamani

In writing *Bidagdha Chintamani*, his *magnum opus*, Abhimanyu was greatly influenced by the six Sanskrit *kavyas* known as *Satkavyas*. He mastered over *Bidagdha Madhava* of Rupagoswami, Vaishnavite works of the time, the Vedas, Upanisadas, Eighteen Puranas, Tapinis, the great lyrics (mahakavyam) in Sanskrit, *Mahabharat*, *Bhagavata*, *Smrti sastras* and books on Sanskrit poetics. The entire *kavya* is complete in 96 cantos and has attained the status of an epic. It is adorned with the characteristics of the Sanskrit poetry. Though this work has been influenced by the poems of Upendra Bhanja and his teacher Sadhu Das, even then Abhimanyu's originality in this *kavya* has been amply demonstrated.

The first canto is almost like the introduction to the entire *kavya*. The poet invokes his deity Radha-Hari, the embodiment of sublime love, in the first stanza of this lyric (*mangalacharan*). His predecessors in lyrical poetry like Upendra, Dinakrushna, Balarama, etc., invoked either Jagannatha or Rama or some other deity in the beginning of their works. But Abhimanyu, similar to the ideal of his teacher Sadbu Das, has invoked Radha-Hari instead. In narrating his poetic ideals he has followed in the first canto the traditional path shown by his predecessors. At the outset there is the praise of the gentle and the denouncement of the wicked. Moreover, he has spoken about his hard labour, erudition, scholarship, the role of the critics, and above all the essence of the emotional devotion (*Raganuga bhakti*) in this work. He has throughly read *Sat-Sandharva* of Vaishnava Goswamis and has accepted what is necessary and beneficial for his work. He has not refrained from expressing his opinion about the Vaishnava religion and philosophy. Abhimanyu had tremendous faith in

the roles of the teachers (guru), Krishna and Vaishnava, in order of *sadhana*. This, in course of time, will enable the devotees to serve his beloved Krishna. He has expressed that it is essential for a devotee to serve God. The poet has dominantly acted as the go-between in bringing forth the union between Radha and Krishna through the help of Paurnamasi.

The Gaudiya way of religion and philosophy was his motto and the elementary purpose of this lyrical *kavya* was to exhibit the essence of sweet sentiment (*Madhura rasa*) as well as the glory of it and devotion to Krishna. The poet was the follower of Achintya-Bhedabheda-Bada Philosophy and the propagator of Bhagavata religion. So in the first canto of the *kavya* he has advised the devotees and the people to be devotional in their heart and at the end of each canto his devotional ideas have been presented. In his opinion the devotee or the Vaishnava will ultimately reach God with the help of his religious preceptor. As a result he will attain *Bhagavatya* or service to Krishna. Being a follower of the Gaudiya line of Vaishnavism, he has shown the essence of *Bhagavata dhama tattva* (the abode of Krishna) and *Namatattva* the significance of *Mahamantra*, i.e. *Harekrishna Harerama* in detail. Besides he has shown all the nine stages of *sadhana* beginning from listening-singing (*Nama-cirtana*) to the absolute self-surrendering.

The subject-matter of this great work is the glorification of the deeds of Radha and Krishna and their union. In order to achieve this union he has introduced in the work male and female messengers, attendants and maids who have taken the help of Paurnamasi and Kamaseni, who in turn devised the ways to bring about the union between Radha and Krishna. The tragic sequences, the thoughts of separation, the wailing at the end of the dream, viewing of the paintings, the melody of flute, etc., have been introduced in different cantos by the poet in a unique way. The hero of the *kavya* is Ghanashyama Krishna, the son of the lord of Braja, and the heroine is Sri

Radha, the embodiment of emotional divine love. The poet has brought in Chandravali in the 13th canto of the lyric and has described the union of Chandravali and Krishna. Their union has taken place in a dramatic manner and this dramatic sequence has enhanced the glory of the *kavya* a hundred fold. Above all, the efficiency of the poet has reached the zenith in devising separation between them. The hearing of the name, gazing of the potrait, erring of three persons (*Tripunsavrama*) have been narrated by stages.

The poet has given a beautiful etymological description of the name 'Radha' in her birth ceremony. As she excelled in colour of *Ra*, *Rasa* and *Agnivija*, she was named 'Radha'. After her birth Radha could not open her eyes for three consecutive days. When the infant Krishna was brought before her, she opened her eyes. Yashoda fed Radha with her breast which contained nectar coming in contact with the mouth of Krishna. The sentiment of the *kavya*, though essentially love-oriented, was not only sweet but bright at the same time. The essence of emotion, sentiment, religion and philosophy, according to the Gaudiya line, has been presented in this monumental work.

### *Social Life*

In the 63rd canto, the poet has depicted the art of cooking prevalent in the ancient and medieval periods in Orissa. In course of narrating various cooking methods adopted by Radha and other *gopis*, he has mentioned various types of eats and the mode of their preparation. In fact three main types of cooking were followed in our society during those days. Those were Gauri, Sauri and Nala methods. He has narrated various stages relating to the modes of each style in cooking. The cakes offered in the temple of Jagannatha and the cakes prepared in Oriya houses during the festival days have been copiously described by the poet. It will not be out of place to point out here that there are fifty-six different kinds of cakes prepared in the Jagannath

temple for the purpose of offering to the Lord and most of these cakes have found mention in this lyric. As the use of betel leaf immediately after food was in vogue during those days, the poet considered it worth-while to describe this practice also in detail.

Abhimanyu has further shown the tradition of consulting horoscopes and tallying of the zodiac with the characters. In the fourth canto of the *kavya*, Durvasa was requested to prepare the horoscope of Sri Radha during the birth ceremony, as the sage had a unique efficiency in the preparation of horoscopes.

In some of the cantos the methods of writing letters during medieval days in Orissa have also been described. Particularly the art of writing a letter by the hero to the heroine and vice-versa has been mainly depicted. The custom of mentioning the name of some deity at the first instance is being followed even now in every household. When Radha and Krishna exchanged letters they wrote in the beginning, "Resort at the feet of Sri Sadasiva". The purpose was to wish good and to obtain blessings to ward off bad omen while writing such names. The style of writing letters as well as the colours of the paper and ink used have been noted in the lyric. The love letters were written in red ink on a yellow paper as the red and yellow colours are symbols of love and sanctity.

In each household herding and rearing of cattle was regarded as a tradition. This is also taken as a holy religious custom. In the opinion of the poet this religious practice of rearing the cows in the house-hold enhances the life span, wealth and glory of the people who adhere to this custom.

In some of the cantos the poet has also given a vivid picture of the lower class women in respect of their ways of living and their conduct in the market places. It is interesting to note that the visit of Krishna to the market place, his purchasing of various fruits, cracking jokes with the women of Gopa,

have all been depicted. There is also mention of games like *Laudi* ( sticks ), *Bagudi* ( kabadi ), wrestling and various types of gymnastics, etc.

#### *Lucidity and Lyricism*

Alongwith *Navarasas* (nine *rasa* elements) he has given expression to five Vaishnava *rasas* like *Santa*, *Dasya*, *Sakhya*, *Vatsalya* and *Madhura*. He has laid great stress on *Madhura rasa* throughout his work in a lucid manner. Most of his poems are replete with lyrical elements. That is why Pandit Mrutyunjaya Rath said—

*Upama Bhanja virasya  
Tasyeiva chartha gaurabam  
Kallole pada lalityam  
Santi Chintamanoh trayah.*

While comparing the three major poets of Orissa in the medieval age, Pandit Rath ranked Abhimanyu the highest because of the presence of all the three great qualities of *amaha kavya* in his work. In his opinion Upendra's works are full of *upama* and other *alankaras* as well as *arthagauraba* (significant meaning). The work of Dinakrushna is replete with lyricism and lucidity whereas *Chintamani* of Abhimanyu is complete with all the three qualities, i.e., *alankara*, *arthagauraba* and lyrical element. Lucidity and lyricism are the dominant features of the work which has made him famous in the domain of Oriya Vaishnava literature. Besides, as said before, the work has obtained the recognition of the entire Oriya people as a great lyrical *mahakavya* and has been hailed as a great musical verse. Music and the art of composition of poetry have mingled with each other as pearl and gold unite. The poet has ornamented the lyric with various *ragas*; as *Chakrakeli*, *Rasakulya*, *Sankaravaran*, *Kalyana-Ahari*, *Kalasa*, *Kumbhakamodi*, *Vibhasa*, *Kedara Kamodi*, *Ahari*, *Bhairava*, *Gauri*, *Ramakeri*, *Kali*, *Ghantarava*, *Kalyana*, *Kanada*, *Gitamuktavali*, *Munivara*, *Chokhi*, *Chinta Kamodi*, *Bangalasri*, *Dhanasri*, *Kamodi*, *Baradi*, *Malava*, *Ashadhasukla*, *Sanabhupala*,

*Sindhuda, Saranga, Kedara Gauda, Purvi, Ranaviye, Lalita-Kamodi, Chalaghanta, Kedara, Soka-Kamodi, Jayanta-kala, Rasa-Kedara, Nalnigauda, Mangala, Kala-hansa-Kamodi, Vichitra-desakshya, Pahadia-Kedara, Pataamajari, Malasri, Dhipa, Bhupala, Asavari, Lalita-Kedara, Gujjari, Mukhari, Sangamatiari, Panchamavarali, etc.*

It is wonderful that the poet has shown the use of combined tune of music ( i.e. *Jugmaragas* ). In the musical literature of the Sanskrit language there is only one *raga* ( tune of music ) followed at a time, i.e., *Kalyana, Ahari, Desakhya, Kedara, Vibhasa*, etc. Following the ancient poets of Orissa, Abhimanyu has used combined tunes of music like *Kalyana-Ahari, Chinta Desakhya, Vibhasa-Kedara*, etc. Probably in order to express dual feelings he has used such combined *ragas* ( tune of music ). Moreover, to heighten the union of sentiments *rasa bhava* ) the poet has used joint tunes of music manifested by pathos mingled with love and love mingled with pathos. In lyrical verse the poet has united *Sringara* with *Ujjvala* ( bright ) sentiments and applied those as *Madhura* the foremost of the sentiments. In the whole of the lyric amorous passion ( *Sringara* ) and sweet sentiments ( *Madhura* ) are expressed through the help of the attendants, friends, lady attendants and maids. Moreover, there is evidence of *Santa rasa*, the passive element and parental love ( *Vatshalya* ) in this work. Specially in the expression of parental love the ability of the poet is manifested tremendously. In the 67th canto there is clear evidence of this sentiment : the wailing of mother Yasoda during Krishna's sojourn to forest and delay in return. How pathetically and heart-touchingly the painful expression of the mother's heart has been depicted is amazing for the readers to estimate. This is not the wailing of Yasoda alone ; the pathetic wailings of hundreds of mothers have been projected through it and the personal separation and the love of the child have attained generality and universality

in this. Here the individual has become universal. The poet has described Yasoda's expression of sorrow on the separation of Krishna in forty-five stanzas and in fact this has reached the beaming acme in the lyric.

Let someone tell thou my pathos  
 Thy mother wails ; Oh ! my child—the black jewel.  
 Shall I run to the forest ? the patience fails me  
 To embrace thou close to my breast  
 Feed thou the oozing stream of milk  
 So dear to thee ; Oh ! my black jewel.

( 67th Canto, stanzas 9 & 10 )

Further, the poet has beautifully narrated his experience about love in the following stanza :

Love is no moon, but it would cool.  
 It is no bouts of fever,  
 Yet would make your body quiver  
 And the temperature soar high,  
 It is no doctor, yet would cure  
 Many a disease. It is no overflowing bile  
 Yet could turn you a lunatic,  
 It is no intoxicant, yet  
 It would keep one dazed under a spell  
 Throughout life.

As said before, his first canto is a preface to the whole *kavya*. He has categorically mentioned how and which types of readers will enjoy his work with humility. He has made stress on three things, i.e., guru, Krishna and Vaishnava. If one is not devoted to these, he cannot enter into the realm of his poetry. Mere knowledge of *sastras* will not help. One should have *premavakti* ( devotion to God with love ) in his heart ; then only he can enjoy his verse. Some of the cantos of this verse are so pathetic and yet so charming that a sensitive reader is sure to be moved to tears on reading them. The description of love is divine. One can reach this stage of divine love only through sacrifice and self-surrender.

The primary aim of *Bidagdha Chintamani* is the narration of the game of love and union of Radha-Hari, the embodiment of divine as well as devotional love. Not only devotion but love, emotion, affection, seeming sentimentality and tryst, etc., have found expression in some manner or other in the poem. But the poet is one of the ablest in the description of love. Description like this is rare in Oriya literature and it is one of the few gems of literature written in Indian languages. The expression of sublime love has, as it were, assumed a life in his pen. For the depiction of love Abhimanyu has used 148 stanzas consisting of 3 cantos in this work. In his opinion devotional love is *Panchamapurusharatha* with *Dharma* and *Artha* alongwith *Kama* and *Moksha*. These are the four ulterior objects of life of existence (*Chatuhpurushartham*) but love has been added to these as the fifth *Purushartha*. Moreover, this love is a thing indestructible, always complete and present for ever in the human heart. In the 6th and 7th stanzas of the 39th canto Visakha the maid has dwelt on the nature of true love. She said to Sri Radha, that the great soul is one and inseparable. Love is the creation of God. The heroes and heroines having similarity in beauty, mentality, heart, age and good qualities are capable of enjoying the fruit of ideal love. One never hesitates to sacrifice the life for the other. Love is manifested in the heroes and heroines irrespective of their status or station in life. Here Radha says to her companion :

Who could know the meaning of love !  
 Let me explain its mystery to you Oh dear maiden !  
 It is pristine in character and indestructible by nature,  
 Only the man of high passion is privileged  
 Enough to experience what is love.  
 Because he has not battered his senses.  
 His heart must be without  
 Any blemishes. His mind must be like quick-silver



To respond in matters of love. He must possess the power  
 In him to discern and respond to love's nuances  
 If only you would meet such a man of quality,  
 Love's moon would shine in the sky of your heart.  
 In a lowly character, you would perceive the  
 Illusion of love, like the moon, splintered  
 On a watery plane. In the mediocre,  
 You see only a reflection as on a mirror but in  
 The virtuous you experience the spotless and timeless  
 Qualities of love. It would fulfil your heart's content  
 With heavenly joy.

( 39th Canto, stanzas 3 to 6 )

She further says :

Let me tell you more about it.  
 The Cupid would sow the seed of love  
 In your heart's region  
 The seed would sprout into a loving seedling  
 When you feel love in you. If one  
 Watered it with love and tender care,  
 The little plant would grow into a prodigious  
 Tree of many branches.  
 It is no fire, yet could burn.  
 It is no arrow, but would sink into the depths of your  
 heart

It is no water, yet could bring about the deluge,  
 It is no intoxicant, still could cause confusion  
 It is no fishing rod yet would pull  
 The Fish of your mind out of the depths of secured  
 emotions.

( Canto 39 )

The bond of togetherness between two men,  
 Or a pair of women,  
 Is without any substance as it naturally falls  
 Short of real consummation.  
 The attraction between a man and a woman

Would effect the bond of love between the two  
 For them, it would be the sensuous knot of their  
 True love. Such love-relationship is of two types  
 Love for your spouse, or love for the other woman.  
 Such love is no cascading stream  
 Yet would wet your body and keep it drenched  
 With beads of perspiration.  
 The lovers are no wealthy beings, yet would feel  
 Mighty proud with riches of their love.  
 They are no saints, nor endowed with powers  
 Through some penance. Yet they pride themselves as the  
 Blessed ones. They are no sinners either. Yet would  
 Resign into the sufferings of separation  
 Majestically. They are no Gods, yet  
 Inhabit the strange abode of love and enjoy  
 Its fruits in consummation.

( Canto 42 ) ( Neo-vaishnavism ;

*Religion and Philosophy (Advent of Neo-vaishnavism)*

In religious and philosophical matters the poet has nowhere said explicitly that he was influenced by Gaudiya or Chaitanya philosophy. On the other hand, he has asked the readers to search for the same in the works of his teacher Sadhu Das.

In fact, during the early part of the 16th century A.D. a new Vaishnavite movement germinated, blossomed and flowered at Nilachala-Puri in Orissa though this was known to a very few scholars. It is a matter of great astonishment that the Vaishnava religious cult expounded by Chaitanya had behind it the important bases prepared by the devotionalist Jagannath Das and the sentimentalist Ray Ramananda Patnaik of Orissa and this fact has escaped the notice of scholars and has not been mentioned in the pages of history. Had these two persons not taken birth in Orissa and their friendship and intimacy not developed with Chaitanya, the neo-Vaishnavism would not have seen the light of

the day. Although the advent of Chaitanya gave a new impetus to the growth and development of Vaishnava faith and movement in Orissa, yet the contributions of Jagannath Das and Ray Ramananda were no less. No doubt that the two important springs of Vaishnavism took shapes in Navadvipa and Vrindavana, yet their centre of life was at Nilachala. Chaitanya spent the last 18 years of his life at Puri. Through the efforts of his disciplined Goswamis alongwith Swami Jagannatha Das and devotee Ray Ramananda Patnaik from among the five friends ( *Pancha Sakhas* ) of Orissa, and especially, with the combined genius of Chaitanya, Ramananda and Jagannatha Das this neo-Vaishnavism took its birth at Nilachala-Puri. The devotionism ( *Bhaktivada* ) of Jagannatha and the sentimentalism ( *Rasavada* ) of Ray Ramananda combined together resulting in the birth of the Devotional Love Cult ( *Premabhaktivada* ) which was known subsequently as Gaudiya line of Vaishnavism, a description which is rather unreasonable. It is a matter of regret that the contribution of these two erudite scholars and devotees could not be propagated properly in the learned circles. The idea which in reality took its birth in Nilachala later reached Vrindavana and Navadvipa through Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Even an atmosphere was created by which Ray Ramananda and Jagannatha remained in the background. Had there been no discussion between Chaitanya and Ray Ramananda on the bank of the river Godavari anew interpretation of the essence of love, sentiment and devotion could not have taken its birth. Of course, afterwards Sridharaswami, the commentator of the Bhagavata from Orissa, and later devotees like Rasikananda, Shyamananda, etc., expounded this cult sufficiently in and outside Orissa. Moreover, Baladeva Vidyabhushana, a resident from the bank of Chilika in Orissa, wrote *Govinadhavasyam*, the philosophy of *Achintyabhedabheda*. These facts have not been recorded clearly in the pages of history so far. Whatever it be, as a result of this movement, a strong tradition was created in

Orissa which provided the impetus for the composition of hundreds of first rate *kavyas* and lyrics based on Vaishnava religion and philosophy in between 16th and 19th centuries and that tradition was grievously lacking around Vrindavana or Navadvipa of Bengal.

### *The Role Of The Female Attendants*

The traits of an attending maid and the characteristic features of a heroine are also mentioned at a few places of the lyric. The depiction of five types of maids alongwith the description of *Mugdha Nayika* (a dame in trance), the features of male and female emissaries, different maids ( female messengers ), special type of female attendants named *Cheti* and *Biti* ( coquettes and flirts ) etc. in the 94th canto of the *kavya* have become nice adornments of the *Alankara Sastra*. Here the poet narrates the ideal love as follows :

No amount of misery could unfasten  
The bond of true love.  
The sugarcane yields its sweet juice  
Only when crushed.  
Blocks of gold shine brighter when melt on fire  
And beaten on the anvil.  
Great love is like this,  
Oozing sweetness when crushed in misery  
And spreading its hue when tested in adversity.

( 94th Canto, stanza 33 )

As has been narrated before, the role of the female attendants is very important in this work. With the help of these attendants the poet has brought the union of Radha and Krishna. In exposing the game (*lila*) the poet has also shown the ideal nature of *Lila in* its fullest form.

### *The Agony of Separation*

Abhimanyu is a pining lover. The description of the

separation of Radha has reached its acme of excellence and in this direction he has achieved unique success and acquired foremost credit. The description by the hero and the heroine of each other's beauty as narrated in the lyric has probably no parallel in our literature. Poets like Magha and Sriharsha have also given such descriptions. But the realism that is seen in the description of Abhimanyu is hardly found in the works of Sriharsha and Magha in Sanskrit literature. Particularly the fine imagination that was shown in description of 'smile and 'lips' of the heroine creates pleasant shiverings in the heart of the readers. Srikrishna was narrating the smile and the beauty on the lips of Radha in the company of friends.

There was a soft smile on her red lips  
 It was like the silver moonlight  
 Spreading across from a pair of ruby-red doors, her lips,  
 The boat of coral as it were was laden with milk.

( Canto 46, stanza 17 )

He further says :

In the meadow of flowers,  
 She pranced around with her maids.  
 She was like the shaft of light  
 Playful amongst the knots of golden boughs  
 She was the moon  
 In the sky of myriad stars  
 She was the goddess of wealth as it were.  
 Engaged with her companion-maids in pranking bouts.

( Canto 46, stanza 3 )

Radha admires the charming beauty of Krishna that maddened her in ecstasy, and losing her self-consciousness she holds the hand of her maid and entreats her in the following manner :

He was draped in the darker hue of the blue lotus  
 And the sensuous lustre of the dark yellow gem-stone  
 In him lay reposed pleasure and passion, joy and

jollity of enchaining togetherness and  
sedative love :

The bliss of union and charming divinity,  
In him he contained the essence of the world's beauty,  
In him converged the quintessential charm of a million  
cosmos.

He was the repository of all gems and jewels of beauty  
and splendour.

( Canto 47, stanza 2 )

She further beholds the bright and lovely colours of Krishna  
in these lines :

The shafts of blue light emanating from his self  
Spread through the partings of the soft new leaves  
of the forest.

To the jungle denizens, birds and animals,  
He was like the soothing shadow, cast by the sooty clouds  
Sprinkling loving drops in tender care, everywhere.  
It was like the river Yamuna crossing her banks  
And denuding the land  
In a flood of bounteous beauty.

( Canto 47, stanza 29 ).

His poetic composition is full of emotional feeling and subtle sensibilities. Although some of his cantos are not free from eroticism yet the language used by him is simple, lucid, charming and figurative. The reader is captivated by the sentiment of the poetry. To each and every part of the body of the hero such as face, nose, forehead, lip, ear, arm, etc., the poet has devoted separate stanzas. Sparkling scholarship and wide erudition have been reflected in these descriptions. Though in the 7th canto of the *Nalshadha*, Sriharsha has described the beauty alongwith dresses and ornaments etc. of Damayanti in the words of Nala, the hero, and in the 8th canto the beauty of Nala in the words of Damayanti, yet the depictions of Abhimanyu have become far more psychological and real.

In imagination Abhimanyu has far excelled Sriharsha. In each stanza different types of figurative speeches (*alankaras*) have made this work superb.

The essence of Bhagavatism like the theme of love is also described in this lyrical *kavya*. In his view Hari is God, the possessor of six attributes. He has neither the beginning nor the end. He is both qualitative and without it. He takes different shapes at different times in different incarnations. The lyrical verses here delineate the emotion of separation intensely felt by Radha. The emotion of separation is more vivid than the emotion of union.

## CONCLUSION

Abhimanyu was the last of the outstanding classical poets belonging to the medieval age in Orissa. He has distinguished himself as a powerful and popular poet for ornate style of composition and the devotional fervour of his poetry. He gave the Oriya language its true idioms a feat and an achievement, which his contemporary poets found extremely difficult to surpass. Abhimanyu's superb poetic ideas and feelings are blended with his excellent sense of music in *Bidagdha Chintamani* thus making it a creation of exquisite craftsmanship. Moreover, in this *kavya* the colloquial idioms of Oriya language are beautifully placed alongside the archetypes of traditional poetry. Hence, despite his occasional pedantic outpourings, rhetorical gymnastics or magic with the words, he could be appreciated by the common folk. Abhimanyu was truly the poet of the masses.

His *kavya*, almost the *vade-mecum* of the Oriya Vaishnabas, had for its theme the divine love of Radha and Krishna. He offers throughout the immortal work his salutation and sings of the glories of Radha-Krishna as an embodiment of supra-physical divine love which signifies the spiritual consummation of two souls. Their sole objective is to manifest what is hidden. In some of the enchanting lines of this great work the poet has been able to carry his readers to the El Dorado of love where gross sexuality has been sublimed by the ecstatic joys of love. This state of beatitude or ecstatic love can hardly be achieved by any average human being unless he is blessed with the special grace of the Supreme Being.

Though an exponent of divine love, Abhimanyu has always added human dimension to his treatment of love and some times come down to the level of naked unrefined arabesque. His poetry, to an objective critic, appears to be swinging between the



sublime and the grotesque, between the splendid divine love and the most commonplace earthly love.

*Bidagdha Chintamani* contains many verses which are affluent with deep pathos and emotions. These simple verses speak of the tender feelings of human heart in a natural way. Here the poet has become universal as well as timeless. The soft nuance of words, their native alliterations and resonance with music—all combine to give them popular texture, both in form and content. This is the most valued contribution of Abhimanyu.

In various stanzas of his work he narrates in a masterly manner the wailings of Radha and her musings in the absence of Krishna ; and the pangs of separation eating into her veins make every woman who reads it cry in utter grief. Radha, an incarnation of pure love, goes into ecstasy even on mere hearing of Krishna's name. She asks again and again Lalita, her bosom friend, to repeat it.

Radha—What's his name you said ?

Oh ! Lalita ! what's his name ?

Lalita—Have you fallen in love with his name

My dear ! It was Krishna that I said.

Radha's last wish, in case she dies of separation from Krishna, is surcharged with deep pathos and a tragic grandeur rarely found in Vaishnavic literature. She says to her friend (*Sakhi*) :

Perchance I die, put my corpse under the *Tamal tree* both my hands embracing its trunk. Turn my ears to the direction from where the tunes of Krishna's flute come aflowing.

Such is the starry poetry Abhimanyu, the poet of the *Ragamarg*.

*Ragamarg*, as he himself calls it, is the path of divine love for the Godhead Krishna. His concept of love is not a bed of roses. The essential elements of love are sufferings and sacrifices

for the beloved. Secrecy is the keynote of such love. Abhimanyu has not only enriched and improvised the Oriya poetry of ornate genre with devotional love and *Bhakti* by his deft application of Sanskrit rhetoric, he has also made lasting contribution to the development of Oriya Prakrit as a whole by harmonising *Divya* ( Sanskrit ) and *Adivya* ( Prakrit ) and by bringing about a fusion of the two into an integrated verse-pattern of his own, which defies translation into any other Indian language without losing much of its charm and sound nuance and the intricate music of the word-associations inherent in them. He has made Oriya language sweeter and more lucid and has handed over to the posterity a rich harvest of poetry where emotions have been converted into experiences and experiences into authentic expression of a genuine poetic voice.

Abhimanyu will remain evergreen in Oriya literature for his matchless poetry in which form and thoughts have fused into an authentic image of beauty leading one to realise the infinite through finite.

Poets prior to him like Dinakrishna and Bhaktacharan Das had individual designs. Dinakrishna wanted to establish the greatness of *Gopibhava* throughout his *kavya* named *Rasakallola*. There is no mention of Radha in this work although it deals with a *lila* of Krishna with *gopis*. He has ably depicted and described the wailings of *gopis* due to their separation from the company of Krishna. The importance of *gopis* has been highlighted in this work. Bhaktacharan, the author of *Mathura mangal*, also has the similar idea of depicting the element of separation of *gopis* from Krishna when he left Gopa for ever and went to Mathura to establish peace there as it was disturbed by Kamsa by his mischievous activities. Here the poet wants to narrate vividly the pathetic condition of the *gopis*, their love episode with Krishna, etc., in a very lucid style. The *rasa*

element is in a mixed form here, i.e., *Aisurya* and *Madhurya*. The God has two distinct *lila*, one *Aisurya* and another *Madhurya*. In *Mathura Mangal* the *Aisurya lila* of Krishna has been depicted whereas in *Bidagdha Chintamani* it is the *Madhurya lila*. Here in *Bidagdha Chintamani*, *Radhabhava* is prominently shown. Abhimanyu was the follower of *Dasyabhava* but his aim was *Premabhakti rasa*. He accepted *bhakti* as a *rasa* and gave exposition of this *bhakti rasa* from beginning to end of this work. This aspect of *Dasyabhava* found expression in the lyrics of Gopal krishna, Banamali, Gaurahari and Gauracharan. The Radhakrishna philosophy propounded by Abhimanyu has influenced the contemporary and later poets to a great extent, particularly Gopalkrishna and others.

## KEY TO PRONUNCIATION

Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara	Abhimanyu Sāmanta Simhāra
Achintyabhedabhedavada	Achintyabhedābhedavāda
Agama	Āgama
Ahari	Āhāri
Aisvarya	Aīsvarya
Alamkara	Aḷamkāra
Alivardi Khan	Ālivardi Khān
Anangarekha	Anāngarekhā
Artavallabha Mohanty	Ārtavallabha Mohānty
Asadhasukla	Āśādhaśukla
Asadhasuklavani	Āśādhaśuklavaṇi
Asavari	Āsāvāri
Asvaghosa	Aśvaghōsa
Baladevavidyabhusana	Baladevavidyābhūṣaṇa
Balaramadas	Balarāmadās
Banabhatta	Bāṇabhaṭṭa
Bhagavata	Bhāgavata
Bhajana Chautisa	Bhajana Chautiśā
Bhaktivada	Bhaktivāda
Bharavi	Bhāravi
Bhaskara	Bhāskara
Bhavabhuti	Bhavabhūti
Bhupala	Bhūpāḷa
Chadheiagita	Chadheiagīta
Chaitanyamahaprabhu	Chaitanyamahāprabhu
Chakrakeri	Chakrakeri
Chalaghanta	Chalaghanta
Chandravali	Chandrāvali
Chaupadi	Chaupādi

Chaura	Chaurā
Chaura Chintamani Jagannatha	Chaura Chintāmaṇi Jagannātha
Chintakamodi	Chintākāmodī
Chitrakala	Chitrakalā
Dasyabhava	Dāsyabhāva
Dhamatraya	Dhāmatraya
Dhananjaya Bhanja	Dhanañjaya Bhañja
Dhanasri	Dhanāśrī
Dhapa	Dhapā
Dinakrsna	Dīnakṛṣṇa
Duti	Dūtī
Ekavali	Ekāvalī
Gauri	Gaurī
Ghanasyama Krsna	Ghanaśyāma Kṛṣṇa
Ghantarava	Ghantāraṇa
Gitagovinda	Gītagovinda
Gitamuktavali	Gītamukravālī
Gopibhava	Gopībhāva
Govarachadhei	Govarāchadhēi
Govardhanacharya	Govarḍhanāchārya
Govindabhasya	Govindabhāṣya
Govindalilamrta	Govindalīlāmṛta
Gujjari	Gujjarī
Guna	Guṇa
Gurucharana	Gurucharāṇa
Harekrsnaharerama	Harekṛṣṇaharerāma
Jagannathadas	Jagannāthadās
Jagulai	Jāgulāi
Kalahamsa	Kalāhaṁṣa

Kalahamsakamodi	Kaḷahaṃsakāmodi
Kalahamsakedara	Kaḷahaṃsakedāra
Kalasa	Kaḷasā
Kalavati	Kaḷāvati
Kali	Kāli
Kalidasa	Kālidāsa
Kalyana-ahari	Kalyāna-āhārī
Kamaseni	Kāmasenī
Kamodi	Kāmodi
Kanchanalata	Kañchanalātā
Karamanga	Karamaṅgā
Kavadi	Kavāḍi
Kavisamrat	Kavisamrāt
Kavya	Kāvya
Kedaragauda	Kedāragauda
Kedarakamodi	Kedārakāmodi
Kotibrahmanda-Sundari	Koṭibrahmanda-Sundarī
Kṛsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami	Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī
Kumbhakamodi	Kumbhakāmodi
Lalitakamodi	Lalitakāmodi
Lalitedara	Lalitakedāra
Landi (Khela)	Landi (Khela)
Lavanyavati	Lāvanyavati
Lila	Lilā
Lilavati	Lilāvati
Madhurya	Mādhurya
Magha	Māgha
Mahabharata	Mahābhārata
Mahakavya	Mahākāvya
Mahamana	Mahāmana
Malasri	Māḷasrī
Malava	Māḷava
Mangala	Maṅgala

Mangalacharana	Maṅgalācharaṇa
Mathuramangala	Mathurāmaṅgaḷa
Meghaduta	Meghadūta
Mṛtyunjaya Ratha	Mṛtyuñjaya Ratha
Mugdhanayika	Mugdhānāyika
Mukhari	Mukhārī
Munivara Chokhi	Munivara Chokhī
Murari	Murāri
Naisadha	Naiṣadha
Naladamayanti	Naladamayantī
Naliniganda	Nalinīganda
Namatatva	Nāmatatva
Narasimha Sena	Narasimha Sena
Narasimhadeva	Narasimhadeva
Navadvipa	Navadvīpa
Nilachala	Nīlāchaḷa
Nisthanilamani	Niṣṭhānīlamanī
Ojah	Ojaḥ
Pahadiakedara	Pāhādiākedāra
Panchagosvami	Pañchagosvāmī
Panchamavaradi	Pañchamavarādī
Panchasakha	Pañchasakhā
Parimala	Parimalā
Patahamanjari	Patahamāñjarī
Paurnamasi	Paurṇamāsī
Prachina-Utkala	Prāchīna-Utkāḷa
Prasada	Prasāda
Premachintamani	Premachintāmaṇi
Premakala	Premakaḷā
Premasudhanidhi	Premasudhānidhi
Prematarangini	Prematarāṅgiṇi
Puravi	Pūravī

Purusartha	Puruṣārtha
Radhahari	Rādhāhari
Radhakṛsna	Rādhākṛṣṇa
Raghunatha Harichandan	Raghunātha Harichandan
Ramakeri	Rāmakerī
Ramaprasada Simha	Rāmaprasāda Siṃha
Ramasita	Rāmasīta
Rasakedara	Rasakedāra
Rasakulya	Rasakulyā
Rasikaharavali	Rasīkahārāvalī
Rasikananda	Rasīkānanda
Riti	Rīti
Rupagosvami	Rūpagosvāmī
Sadannda Kavisurya Brahma	Sadānanda Kavisūrya Brahmā
Sadasiva	Sadaśiva
Sadhana	Sādhanā
Sadhudasa	Sādhudāsa
Sahityadarpana	Sāhityadarpaṇa
Samba	Śāmba
Samkarabharana	Śaṃkarābharaṇa
Sanabhupala	Sānabhūpaḷa
Sangamtiari	Sāṅgamtīarī
Sangitasamrat	Sāṅgītasamraṭ
Santa	Śānta
Sarvangasundari	Sarvāṅgasundarī
Satkavya	Ṣaṭkavya
Satsandarbha	Ṣaṭsandarbha
Sauri	Śaurī
Siddhesvara Parida	Siddheśvara Parida
Sindhuda	Sīndhudā
Sivaparvati	Śivapārvatī
Smrtisastra	Smṛtiśāstra
Sokakamodi	Śokakāmodī



Sridharadasa	Śrīdharadāsa
Sridharasvami	Śrīdharasvāmī
Sriharsa	Śrīharṣa
Srngara	Sṛṅgāra
Sudhakara	Sudhākara
Sulaksana	Sulakṣaṇā
Suryanarayanadas	Sūryanārāyaṇadās
Svarajyasahitya	Svarājyasāhitya
Svayambara	Svayambāra
Syamananda	Śyāmānanda
Tamala	Tamāla
Tankaharanayak	Tankadharanāyaka
Tapini	Tāpinī
Trailokyanohini	Trailokyamohinī
Tripurasundari	Tripurasundarī
Tulasi	Tuḷasī
Ujjvala	Ujjvalā
Umapatidhara	Umāpatidhara
Upama	Upamā
Upendrabhanja	Upendrabhañja
Utkala Sahitya	Utkalā Sāhitya
Vaghagita	Vāghagīta
Vaghasikara	Vāghaśīkāra
Vagudi (Khela)	Vāgudi (Khela)
Vaisnava	Vaiṣṇava
Vamana	Vāmana
Vanamali	Vaanmālī
Vanchhavati	Vañchhavatī
Vangalasri	Vaṅgalāśrī
Varadi	Varādī
Vatsalya	Vātsalya
Vichitradesakhya	Vichitradesākhyā

Vidyadhara	Vidyādhara
Vilvamangala	Vilvamaṅgala
Vimaladevi	Vimalādevī
Vinodia	Vinodīa
Visakha	Viśākhā
Vṛndavana	Vṛndāvana
Vṛsabhanu	Vṛṣabhānu
Yajapura	Yājapura
Yugalarasamṛta-bhaumri	Yugalarasāmṛta-bhaumrī
Yugalarasamṛta-lahari	Yugalarasāmṛta-laharī
Yugma-raga	Yugma-rāga

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